implemented i nthe State. An area of 90,000 hectare is targetted to be afforested during 1988-89 with an outlay of Rs. 34.79 crores.

Crisis in textile industry of Varanasi

3592. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether textile industry of Varanasi is passing through a critical period due to rising prices of silk;

(b) if so, the percentage increase in silk prices, during the last two years; and

(c) the steps taken to supply good quality of silk at reasonable prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) to (c) Percentage increase in prices of twisted Silk Yarn of 20|22 Dr. at Varanasi market during the last 2 years is as under:—

Year	Average Price (Rs./kg.)	Percentage increase over preceding year/ corresponding year
1987	683	
1988	910	33.2
1989 (Jan—March)	1021	10.9

In order to provide relief to the silk weavers in the country, (including UP), Central Silk Board was allowed to import 100 tonnes of raw silk under its Price Stabilisation Scheme. Out of 36 tonnes of raw silk imported by the Board so far, approximately 10 tonnes has been allotted to handloom agencies in Uttar Pradesh which has been distributed. Besides, permission has been granted to agencies in UP to import a total quantity of 30 tonnes of raw silk directly for distribution among the weavers of the State.

In addition, Karnataka Silk Marketing Board has opened an additional silk yarn depot at Varanasi and has offered to sell silk yarn on credit to 3 Apex Co-operative Societies on the guarantee of the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh.

Take over of sick textile mills

3593. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of sick textile mills taken over by the Central Government so far; and

(b) what are the terms and conditions under which these mills have been taken over?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) and (b) As on 25-3-1989, the Central Government have taken over the management of 15 textile mills. The terms and conditions of the take over of management are given in the relevant legislative enactments, namely, the Textile Undertakings (Taking over of Management) Act, 1983 and the Laxmirattan and Atherton West Cotton Mills (Taking over of Management) Act, 1976.

Foreign Tours of the Chairman, Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation

3594. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of countries visited by the Chairman of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation during the last two years, till date;

(b) the duration of stay in each country; and

(c) the success achieved in building up business relationship and boosting exports from India as a result of these visits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) and (b) A Statement is attached (*See* below).

(c) These visits were undertaken for various purposes e.g. participation as a member of a Govt./Trade delegation/attending of conferences/meetings discussions for finalisation of import-export transactions, counter trade arrangements, joint ventures, project exports, negotiations for determining quantity and price of minerals & ores etc. As a result of these and other steps, the export turnover of the corporation reached Rs. 728.4 crores in 1987-88 and is expected to reach Rs. 888.5 crores in 1988-89.

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of the country visited	Duration of Stay
	1987-88	
1	China & Hong Kong	25-5-87 to 30-5-87
2	Singapore, Malaysia	8-6-87 to 13-6-87
3	Finland, UK & Jordan	21-6-87 to 2-7-87
4	USSR	11-7-87 to 15-7-87
5	Tokyo, Canada & San Francisco	10-8-87 to 22-8-87
6	Tokyo	20-12-87 to 24-12-87
7	Japan & South Korea	18-1-88 to 27-1-88
	1988-89	
1	Paris, Dakar & Lome	29-5-88 to 6-6-88
2	Tokyo	3-7-88 to 7-7-88
3	Romania	4-9-88 to 11-9-88
4	Manila (Philippines)	24-9-88 to 3-10-88
5	Tokyo	13-11-88 to 18-11-88
6	Tokyo	20-12-88 to 26-12-88
7	Tokyo & South Korea	12-3-89 to 18-3-89

Election petitions pending in Supreme Court and High Courts

3595. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) how many election petitions are pending in various High Courts and the Supreme Court and since how long they are pending; and

(b) whether there is any proposal to establish special courts/benches for early settlement of these cases, if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ): (a) Particulars regarding the number of pending election petitions are as under:

(i) Pending in High Courts.	173
(ii) Pending n the Supreme Court.	122

The details regarding the period of pendency State-wise, are given in the statement attached at Annexure [*See* Appendix CXLIX, Annexure No. 181].

(b) No, Sir.